

## EDUCATIONAL PLAYING SURFACE

## 5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present relates to an educational aid for teaching the recognition of a set of symbols. More particularly the invention relates to an educational aid that can be used to play games that stimulate learning in children.

10 The use of various educational aids to teach people to recognize symbols, such as the alphabet is known in the prior art.

Examples of educational aids can be seen in US 6,419,495 to Lehmkuhl discloses an educational desk mat, which is used to show a student's progress and behaviour; US 5,813,866 to Maeda which discloses a cloth chart for learning characters; and US D370,818 to D'Alessio which discloses a design for an interlocking alphabet mat.

15 The use of games as education aids is also recognized. This use is seen as being especially successful with children since the use of games as educational aids makes the learning process more enjoyable, thus making the children more receptive to learn. As a result the prior art contains many examples of different educational aids in the form of games that can also be used for educational purposes.

20 It is also common for the educational games to be designed so as to require movement during the playing of a game. This not only provides exercise to the user of the educational aid, but also helps the user develop coordination and motor skills.

One example of an educational aid in the form of a game can be seen in US patent 6,030,228 to Armstrong, which describes an educational system having a base or mat  
25 on which symbols and shapes may be mounted. The system also includes a plurality of marbles and figurines for being removably positioned adjacent to the symbols and shapes. This educational system provides teachers or instructors with an aid that can be

used to make learning a game. The system does however have a disadvantage in that its construction is complex; thus potentially making it costly. Additionally, the system includes many small pieces which can easily be lost, or which can potentially provide a choking hazard for small children.

5 Another example of an educational aid in the form of a game can be seen in US 5,971,761 to Tillman, Sr., which discloses an educational electronic baby mat. This invention displays a number of symbols on its surface, and has electronics that allow the symbols to be lighted up when a child presses on the appropriate surface. This device has the disadvantage of being difficult to manufacture.

10 Further examples of educational aids in the form of games can be seen in US 5,507,495 to Kiss, which discloses games for teaching alphabet, number, colours, shapes, and math along with coordination and motor skills. The games disclosed in the Kiss reference are too complex and include too much information.

15 Finally, US 1,459,996 to Schwarz describes an educational and amusement toy that comprises a spinning pointer and a disc with indicia thereon. For instance, the indicia may be the letters of the alphabet accompanied with a number indicating their placement in the alphabet. This game is quite limited in the education it can provide. Furthermore, the game does not provide any exercise to the person playing it.

20 As can be seen from the above examples, there are several examples of educational games in the prior art. However, as the examples have also shown none of these games provide a simple, educational aid, which can be used to teach a person to recognize a set of symbols, while also providing exercise.

## STATEMENT OF THE INVENTION

One aspect of the invention provides an educational aid which may comprise:

- 25     a support having a surface; and  
       a plurality of gaming groups disposed on said surface,

each of said gaming groups comprising at least two gaming zones;

each gaming zone comprising a symbol (e.g. indicia) component and a base colour component;

the gaming zones of each gaming group having the same base colour component

- 5 the gaming zones of each gaming group having different symbol components.

In a more particular embodiment each of said gaming groups may comprise a pair of (i.e. two) gaming zones.

In another particular embodiment each of said gaming zones may comprise an additional colour component.

- 10 In another particular embodiment each of said symbol components may be sandwiched between a respective base colour component and a respective additional colour component.

- In another particular embodiment, for each gaming zone said base colour component and said additional colour component may be disposed in a predetermined colour  
15 sequence, and the gaming zones of each gaming group may have the same colour sequence; the predetermined colour sequence of each gaming group may be unique.

In another particular embodiment said gaming zones may be disposed around the periphery of a central area.

In another particular embodiment said central area may be substantially circular.

- 20 In another aspect the invention provides an educational aid kit, which may comprise:

at least two supports each having a surface; and

a plurality of gaming zones each disposed on a respective surface,

a plurality of gaming groups, each comprising at least two of said gaming zones;  
each gaming zone comprising a symbol (e.g. indicia) component and a base colour component;

- 5 the gaming zones of each gaming group having the same base colour component  
the gaming zones of each gaming group having different symbol components.

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Fig 1 shows a first example embodiment of an educational aid according to the present invention.

- 10 Fig 2 shows an enlarged view of one of a gaming zone used in the educational aid shown in Fig 1.

Fig 3 shows a second example embodiment of an educational aid according to the present invention.

- 15 Fig 4 shows a third example embodiment of an educational aid according to the present invention.

Fig 5 shows a fourth example embodiment of an educational aid according to the present invention.

Fig 6 shows a fifth example embodiment of an educational aid according to the present invention.

- 20 Fig. 7 shows a sixth example embodiment of an educational aid according to the present invention.

Fig 8 shows a seventh example embodiment of an education aid according to the present invention.

Fig 9 shows an example of a fastening means, which may be used with the embodiment of the invention shown in Fig 8.

- 5 Fig 10 shows another example of a fastening means, which may be used with the embodiment of the invention shown in Fig 8.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention relates to an educational aid for teaching students, most often young children, to recognize different symbols, in particular the alphabet.

- 10 One example embodiment of an educational aid is shown in Fig 1. The invention educational aid 10 comprises a base support having a surface 20 on which is disposed a plurality of gaming zones 30, 30a, 30b, 30c, 30d, 30e, 30f, and 30g, in a substantially circular pattern. As can be seen the educational aid 10 has eight gaming zones, other embodiments, however, may have a different number of gaming zones.
- 15 It should be noted that while the educational aid of the invention can accommodate any number of gaming zones, preferred embodiments have between 10 and 16 gaming zones. This range allows for a substantial number of symbols to be taught while not overloading a student. Furthermore, one aspect of the educational aid of the invention allows for the educational aid to be embodied as a large floor mat. In this embodiment
- 20 the students playing a game using the educational aid will be able to stand on the gaming zones. Thus the gaming zones need to be large enough to accommodate the students.

The surface 20 may be defined by any appropriate or desired base member surface on 30 which the gaming zones 30 to 30g may be disposed. The surface 20 may for

example be defined by a support such as a (flexible) floor mat.

The type of support used depends primarily on the way the educational aid 10 is to be used. For instance, if the educational aid 10 is to be used as a large game board on which the students stand and move around, then a large vinyl mat may be advantageous. Such a vinyl mat may be lightweight, easy to clean, and may be easily be put away for storage.

On the other hand, if desired an embodiment of the educational aid may be included in a dedicated play area (e.g. an outside playground). In this instance the support of the educational aid may be a sidewalk, or a concrete slab. In other aspects, such as if the educational aid is to be used on a smaller scale with the students using markers or playing pieces on the gaming zones, then a simple cardboard sheet might be appropriate.

The size of the surface 20 of the educational aid 10 may for example reflect how it is to be used. For instance, if the educational aid 10 is to be used as a large game board on the ground then the surface 20 must be large enough that the players can stand or sit on the gaming zones 30 to 30g.

Moving on to Fig 2, we can see an enlarged view of gaming zone 30. As can be seen the gaming zone 30 is made up of three components, which are disposed in a sandwich type sequence. These components are a base colour component 32 and an additional colour component 36 both of which are filled with colour (e.g. red and blue respectively). The specific colours filling base colour component 32 and additional colour component 36 may be any colour, or may be if desired the same colour.

In addition to the colour components 32 and 36 gaming zone 30 comprises symbol component 34, which is provided with a symbol or an indicia. In this particular case the symbol component 34 is provided with an upper case and a lower case version of the letter 'A'. Furthermore, the symbol component 34 is provided with a drawing of an airplane so as to help the students associate the letter 'A' with an object starting with the appropriate letter.

As can be seen the basic colour component 32, and the additional colour component 36 are disposed in a sequence thus, giving the gaming zone 30 a colour sequence.

Turning back to Fig 1, we can see that all of the gaming zones 30 to 30g all have a basic colour component, an additional colour component and a symbol component, thus all have a colour sequence. In one particular example embodiment the gaming zones 30 to 30g may have basic colour components, additional colour components, and symbol components as set out in the below table:

Gaming zone	Basic Colour Component (RefNumber:Colour)	Symbol Component (RefNumber:UpperCase, LowerCase, Picture)	Additional Colour Component (RefNumber:Colour)
30	32: Red	34: A, a, Airplane	36: Blue
30a	32a: Blue	34a: B, b, Book	36a: Green
30b	32b: Yellow	34b: C, c, Car	36b: Red
30c	32c: Green	34c: D, d, Door	36c: Yellow
30d	32d: Red	34d: E, e, Ear	36d: Blue
30e	32e: Blue	34e: F, f, Flower	36e: Green
30f	32f: Yellow	34f: G, g, Giraffe	36f: Red
30g	32g: Green	34g: H, h, Hat	36g: Yellow

Furthermore, as can be seen for each gaming zone having a particular colour sequence, there is another gaming zone, which has the same colour sequence only differing in which indicia are used to mark the different symbol components. For instance, gaming zone 30 has the same colour sequence as gaming zone 30d. The only difference is that game zone 30 is marked with the letter 'A' and gaming zone 30d is marked with the letter 'E'. Similarly, gaming zone 30a has the same colour sequence as gaming zone 30e; 30b as 30f; and 30c as 30g.

In this way the different gaming zones 30 to 30g are grouped by their colour sequence. As will be described below, this linking may be used when a game using the

educational aid 10 is played, by asking a player to move from a gaming zone to another gaming zone in the same gaming group.

It should also be noted that the gaming zones 30 to 30g are disposed such that the indicia in their symbol component face inwards. This construction allows a player  
5 standing in one gaming zone to read the indicia of the other gaming zones.

While educational aid 10 has indicia representing the letters of the alphabet, in other embodiments the indicia may represent any appropriate set of symbols, which it is desirable to learn or teach, e.g. numbers and shapes.

Referring to the embodiment of the educational aid shown in Fig 1, a game using the  
10 educational aid 10 will now be described.

To begin play the educational aid 10 is placed on the ground or the floor. A student then uses a random selection mechanism (not shown) to select a gaming zone. The type of random selection mechanism used is not important, and may be any appropriate mechanism, examples include, specially made dice, a spinner, cue cards, or simply a  
15 teacher standing by and telling the student which gaming zone to go to.

After the gaming zone has been selected, the student moves to the appropriate gaming zone. For the purposes of demonstration assume gaming zone 30 was selected. The student upon getting to gaming zone 30 would notice the colours in the colour components 32 and 36 and the indicia in symbol component 34. The student would  
20 then be instructed to locate the gaming zone with the same colour sequence, and move to this gaming zone. In this instance, gaming zone 30d, which has the same colour in its colour components as gaming zone 30. The student's attention would now be especially drawn to the indicia of the gaming zone 30d since the indicia are contrasted with the indicia of gaming zone 30. That is the similarities between gaming zone 30 and 30d  
25 highlight the difference that is the indicia that is being taught.

Additionally, the student would typically be told to stand on the symbol component 30



facing inwards. In this way, directional concepts such as in front and behind are reinforced in the student, as the student needs to be aware of the part of the colour sequence in front of him or her, as well as the part of the colour sequence that is behind him or her.

- 5 In the next step the student would either use the random selection mechanism again if playing alone, or the next student would use the random selection mechanism.

If multiple students are playing the game, and a first student lands on a gaming zone containing a second student, then the students would switch places, with the first student going to the new gaming zone and the second student going to the first student's  
10 old gaming zone.

The game will continue with the students each taking turns using the random selection mechanism for as long as desired.

The type of movement used by the students when moving between the gaming zones may also be varied. Selection of what type of movement to use (running, hopping, walking, etc.) may be included in the random selection mechanism which selects the  
15 gaming zone, a second random selection mechanism may be provided, or a teacher may simply tell the student what type of movement to use.

Moving on to Figures 3 to 6, different example embodiments of the educational aid of the invention may be seen.

- 20 Fig. 3 shows a second example embodiment of an educational aid 110 comprising a surface 120 on which gaming zones 130 to 130g have been printed so as to form a complete circle. In this embodiment the gaming zones 130 to 130g are divided into three consecutive components. For instance gaming zone 130 is divided into a basic colour component 132, and symbol component 134, and an additional colour  
25 component 136.

In one particular example embodiment the gaming zones 130 to 130g may have basic colour components, additional colour components, and symbol components as set out in the below table:

Gaming Zone	Basic Colour Component (RefNumber:Colour)	Symbol Component (RefNumber: UpperCase, LowerCase, Picture)	Additional Colour Component (RefNumber:Colour)
130	132: Red	134: A, a, Airplane	136: Blue
130a	132a: Blue	134a: B, b, Book	136a: Green
130b	132b: Yellow	134b: C, c, Car	136b: Red
130c	132c: Red	134c: D, d, Door	136c: Blue
130d	132d: Blue	134d: E, e, Ear	136d: Green
130e	132e: Yellow	134e: F, f, Flower	136e: Red
130f	132f: Green	134f: G, g, Giraffe	136f: Yellow
130g	132g: Green	134g: H, h, Hat	136g: Yellow

As may be seen, gaming zone 130 has the same basic colour component and additional colour component as 130c; gaming zone 130a as gaming zone 130d; gaming zone 130b as gaming zone 130e; and gaming zone 130f as gaming zone 130g.

Fig 4 shows a third example embodiment of an educational aid 210. This embodiment also comprises a surface 220 on which gaming zones 230 to 230g are disposed. As with the second example embodiment 110 (see Fig. 2), the gaming zones 230 to 230g are disposed so as to form a complete circle on the surface 220. However, in this example embodiment the gaming zones 230 to 230g are only divided into two components, that is one basic colour component and one symbol component.

In one particular example embodiment the gaming zones 230 to 230g may have basic colour components, and symbol components as set out in the below table:

Gaming zone	Basic Colour Component (RefNumber: Colour)	Symbol Component (RefNumber: UpperCase, LowerCase)
230	232: Red	234: A, a

230a	232a: Blue	234a: B, b
230b	232b: Green	234b: C, c
230c	232c: Blue	234c: D, d
230d	232d: Yellow	234d: E, e
230e	232e: Red	234e: F, f
230f	232f: Green	234f: G, g
230g	232g: Yellow	234g: H, h

As may be seen, gaming zone 230 has the same basic colour component as 230e; gaming zone 230a as gaming zone 230c; gaming zone 230b as gaming zone 230f; and gaming zone 230d as gaming zone 230g.

5 Fig 5 shows a fourth example embodiment of an education aid 310. This embodiment also comprises a surface 320, and a plurality of gaming zones 330 to 330k. In this embodiment the gaming zones 330 to 330k are disposed in a substantially rectangular shape.

In one particular example embodiment the gaming zones 330 to 330k may have basic colour components, and symbol components as set out in the below table:

Gaming zone	Basic Colour Component (RefNumber: Colour)	Symbol Component (RefNumber: UpperCase, LowerCase)
330	332: Red	334:A,a
330a	332a: Blue	334a: B, b
330b	332b: Green	334b: C, c
330e	332c: Yellow	334c: D, d
330d	332d: Red	334d: E, e
330e	332e: White	334e: F, f
330f	332f: Yellow	334f: G, g
330g	332g: Black	334g: H, h
330h	332h: Blue	334h: I, i
330i	332i: White	334i: J, j
330j	332j: Green	334j: K, k

330k	332k: Black	334k: L, 1
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As may be seen, gaming zone 330 has the same basic colour component as 330d; gaming zone 330a as gaming zone 330h; gaming zone 330b as gaming zone 330j; gaming zone 330c as gaming zone 330f; gaming zone 330e as gaming zone 330i; and  
5 gaming zone 330g as gaming zone 330k.

Referring to Figures 1, 3, 4, and 5 we can see that all of the educational aids 10, 110, 210, and 310 have their gaming zones disposed so that the indicia in their symbol component face towards the centre of the surfaces 20, 120, 220, and 320. The gaming zones have also been disposed on the periphery of central areas 40, 140, 240, and 340  
10 of the surfaces 20, 120, 220, and 320. Furthermore, in the educational aids 10, 110, and 210 the central areas 40, 140, and 240 are substantially circular.

Each of the educational aids 10, 110, 210, and 310 are particularly advantageous in the aspect of the invention where the educational aid is to be placed on the ground or floor, and where the students are to stand on the gaming zones. In this aspect it is preferable  
15 to have a central area which does not contain any gaming zones, since it allows the student a greater overview of the surface, and ensures the chance that another student blocking the view. Thus the students can more easily find the next gaming zone that they are to move to.

Furthermore, if a teacher wishes to address the students during the game, he or she can  
20 easily stand in the central area and thus have all the students have their attention on him or her. If the teacher wishes to speak for an extended period of time he or she may have the students sit down on their respective gaming zones, while he or she speaks. In this instance the placement of the gaming zones shown in Fig 1, Fig 3, and Fig 4, may be advantageous, since it is more natural for people to gather in a substantially circular  
25 formation rather than a square formation such as in Fig 5.

Fig 6 shows a fifth example embodiment of an educational aid 410. The educational aid 410 also comprises a surface 420 having a plurality of gaming zones 430 to 430e

disposed thereon.

In one particular example embodiment the gaming zones 430 to 430e may have basic colour components, and symbol components as set out in the below table:

Gaming zone	Basic Colour Component (RefNumber: Colour)	Symbol Component (RefNumber: UpperCase, LowerCase)
430	432: Red	434:A, a
430a	432a: Blue	434a: B, b
430b	432b: Green	434b: C, c
430c	432c: Blue	434c: D, d
430d	432d: Red	434d: E, e
430e	432e: Green	434e: F, f

As may be seen, gaming zone 430 has the same basic colour component as 430d;  
 5 gaming zone 430a as gaming zone 430c; and gaming zone 430b as gaming zone 430e.

Unlike the previous embodiments shown in Fig I, 3, 4, and 5 the embodiment shown in Fig 6 does not have the gaming zones 430 to 430e disposed around a central area.

The configuration of the educational aid 410 may be used if the educational aid 410 is to be placed on a desk or a table and the student is to a move marker or playing piece  
 10 on the educational aid 410. In this instance the configuration of the gaming zones 430 to 430e might be advantageous since the student would be looking at the educational aid 410 from only one direction. Thus, having all the indicia of the gaming zones 430 to 430e face the same direction would make them easier to read.

Moving on to Fig 7, we see a sixth example embodiment of an educational aid 510. The  
 15 educational aid 510 again comprises a surface 520 on which is disposed a plurality of gaming zones 530 to 530g, one of which is an intermediate gaming zone 530a as is explained below. The gaming zones 530 to 530g are in this embodiment disposed in a circle around the periphery of circular central area 540 in which is disposed a figure

545. The figure 545 is in the shape of a person and has spatial concepts such as left and right labelled. This figure is provided so that students using the educational aid 510 become familiar with these concepts through extended exposure.

In one particular example embodiment the gaming zones 530 to 530g may have basic colour components, additional colour components, and symbol components as set out in the below table:

Gaming zone	Basic Colour Component (RefNumber: Colour)	Symbol Component (RefNumber:UpperCase, LowerCase)	Additional Colour Component (RefNumber:Colour)
530	532: Blue	534: V, v	536: Green
530a	532a: Red	534a: w,x,y,z (See below)	536a: Blue
530b	532b: Yellow	534b: P, p	536b: Red
530e	532c: Yellow	534c: Q, q	536c: Red
530d	532d: Green	534d: R, r	536d: Yellow
530e	532e: Red	534e: S, s	536e: Blue
530f	532f: Green	534f: T, t	536f: Yellow
530g	532g: Blue	534g: U, u	536g: Green

As may be seen, gaming zone 530 has the same basic colour component and additional colour component as 530g; gaming zone 530a as gaming zone 530e; gaming zone 530b as gaming zone 530c; and gaming zone 530d as gaming zone 530f.

- 10 In addition to the gaming zones 530 to 530g the educational aid 510 has also been provided with auxiliary gaming zones 550, 552, 554, and 556. The auxiliary gaming zones are all given different shapes and are each marked with different indicia. For instance, auxiliary gaming zone 550 is a triangle shape and is marked with the letters 'W' and 'w'; auxiliary gaming zone 552 is a square shape and is marked with the letters
- 15 'X' and 'x'; auxiliary gaming zone 554 is a circle shape and is marked with the letters 'Y' and 'y'; and auxiliary-gaming zone 556 is a rectangle shape and is marked with the letters 'Z' and 'z'.

The auxiliary gaming zones 550 to 556 may also be given respective colours to help differentiate them. For instance, auxiliary gaming zone 550 could be red, auxiliary gaming zone 552 could be blue, auxiliary gaming zone 554 could be green, and auxiliary gaming zone 556 could be yellow.

- 5 The auxiliary gaming zones 550, 552, 554, and 556 allow for the educational aid 510 to teach recognition of the symbols in the symbol components of the gaming zones, (in this case the letter of the alphabet), and recognition of simple shapes at the same time.

- 10 The auxiliary gaming zones may be integrated in the game by the use of an intermediary gaming zone 530a. That is a gaming zone, which is disposed not to act as an intermediary between the play area containing the "normal" gaming zones 530 and 530b, and the auxiliary gaming zones 550 to 556.

To that effect intermediary gaming zone 530a may have a basic colour component 532a (e.g Red), and additional colour component 536a (e.g. Blue), and a symbol component 534a, just like the other gaming zones 530 and 530b.

- 15 However, intermediate gaming zone 530a may be different in that symbol component 534a may be marked with indicia corresponding to the indicia of the auxiliary gaming zones 550, 552, 554, and 556.

- 20 The auxiliary gaming zones 550, 552, 554, and 556 then come into play whenever during a game played with the educational aid 510, and a player arrives at intermediate gaming zone 530a. Either by going directly to it or by way of gaming zone 530e, which is in the same gaming group. When the player arrives at the intermediate gaming zone 530a, he or she may be then told by a teacher to locate the auxiliary gaming zone having a particular shape and then move to the appropriate auxiliary gaming zone. In this way the player may be taught to recognize simple shapes.

- 25 Moving on to fig 8, we can see an example embodiment of an educational aid 610

according to the invention, in which the educational aid 610 comprises multiple supports.

In this embodiment the educational aid 610 comprises a plurality of gaming zones 620 to 620g, each of which is disposed on a separate support. The supports may be any appropriate material. In one example, they could be individual pieces of cardboard.

In one particular example embodiment the gaming zones 620 to 620g may have basic colour components, additional colour components, and symbol components as set out in the below table:

Gaming zone	Basic Colour Component (RefNumber: Colour)	Symbol Component (RefNumber: UpperCase, LowerCase, Picture)	Additional Colour Component (RefNumber: Colour)
620	622: Blue	624: A, a, Airplane	626: Green
620a	622a: Red	624a: B, b, Book	626a: Blue
620b	622b: Yellow	624b: C, c, Cm	626b: Red
620c	622c: Green	624c: D, d, Door	626c: Yellow
620d	622d: Blue	624d: E, e, Ear	626d: Green
620e	622e: Yellow	624e: F, f, Foot	626e: Red
620f	622f: Red	624f: G, g, Giraffe	626f: Blue
620g	622g: Green	624g: H, h, Hat	626g: Yellow

As may be seen, gaming zone 620 has the same basic colour component and additional colour component as 620d; gaming zone 620a as gaming zone 620f; gaming zone 620b as gaming zone 620e; and gaming zone 620c as gaming zone 620g.

The educational aid 610 may be designed similarly to the previously shown educational aids, the main difference being the lack of a support common to all the gaming zones 620 to 620g. The lack of a common support allows education aid 610 to be used for additional games, as well as allowing the educational aid 610 to be stored in a compact manner.



In this embodiment, the students may for example carry the gaming zones 620 to 620g rather than stand on them. This would allow the students to place their respective gaming zones next to another student's gaming zone and compare the differences. Or if the gaming zones 620 to 620g were placed on the floor, then it would allow the teacher to vary the order of the gaming zones 620 to 620g within the circle. This would reduce the likelihood of the students learning to recognize the proper gaming zones by its placement rather than its colour zones or symbols.

Educational aid 610 may also be outfitted with fastening means (See Figs 9 and 10), which could be used to releasably bind the gaming zones 620 to 620g together. For instance the side edges of the gaming zones 620 to 620g may be made to resemble pieces in jigsaw puzzle (See fig 9). Other possible fastening means may include clips which attach to two separate gaming zones (See fig 10), or any other appropriate fastening means.

After the games are finished, the individual pieces of educational aid 610 may be stacked together and easily stored in a box or cabinet.

Although the present invention has been described in connection with example embodiments thereof, many variations and modifications will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

For instance, while the example embodiments shown have only had only one symbol component and a maximum of two colour components, the invention encompasses any number of symbol components and colour components.

Also, while the example embodiments have all been shown with each gaming group comprising only a pair of gaming zones, other embodiments may have any number of gaming zones in their gaming groups. For instance, each gaming group in an educational aid may easily contain three gaming zones. Or in another example each gaming group may comprise four gaming zones.

## Claims:

1. An educational aid comprising:
  - a support having a surface; and
  - 5 a plurality of gaming groups disposed on said surface, each of said gaming groups comprising at least two gaming zones, each gaming zone comprising a symbol component and a base colour component, the gaming zones of each gaming group having the same base colour component, the gaming zones of each gaming group having different symbol components.
- 10 2. An educational aid as described in claim 1, wherein each of said gaming groups comprises a pair of gaming zones.
3. An educational aid as described in claim 1 or 2, wherein each of said gaming zones comprises an additional colour component.
4. An educational aid as described in claim 3, wherein each of said symbol  
15 components is sandwiched between a respective base colour component and a respective additional colour component.
5. An educational aid as described in claim 3 or 4 wherein for each gaming zone said base colour component and said additional colour component are disposed in a predetermined colour sequence, and the gaming zones of each gaming group have  
20 the same colour sequence, the predetermined colour sequence of each gaming group being unique.
6. An educational aid as described in claim 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 wherein said gaming zones are disposed around the periphery of a central area.
7. An educational aid as described in claim 6, wherein said central area is  
25 substantially circular.

8. An educational aid kit comprising:

at least two supports each having a surface; and  
a plurality of gaming zones each disposed on a respective surface,  
a plurality of gaming groups, each comprising at least two of said gaming  
5 zones;

each gaming zone comprising a symbol component and a base colour component,

the gaming zones of each gaming group having the same base colour component,

the gaming zones of each gaming group having different symbol components.

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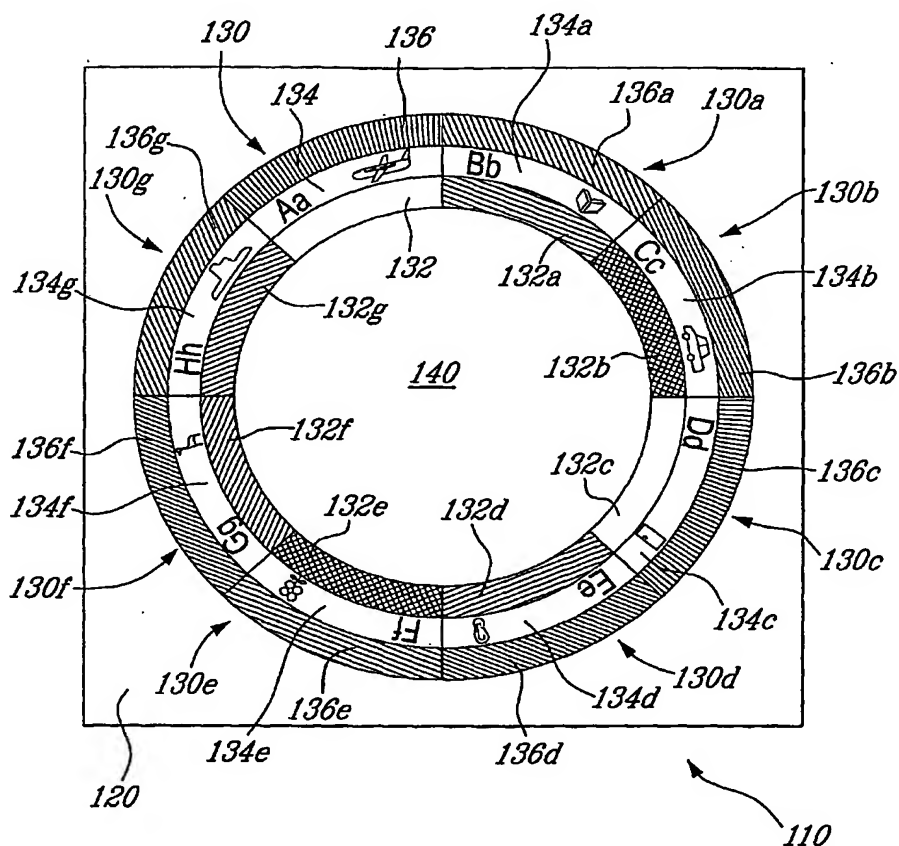
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kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH,  
GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM,  
ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),  
European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI,  
FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI,  
SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ,  
GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: EDUCATIONAL PLAYING SURFACE



(57) Abstract: An educational aid for teaching students to recognize symbols such as the alphabet and numbers. The educational aid comprises a surface on which a plurality of gaming groups is disposed. Each gaming group comprises two or more gaming zones. The gaming zones each comprise a colour component and a symbol component. The gaming zones in each gaming group have the same colour component and different symbol components. When used the educational aid uses the contrast between the same colour components and the different symbol components in the gaming zones to draw the attention of the students to the symbol components.

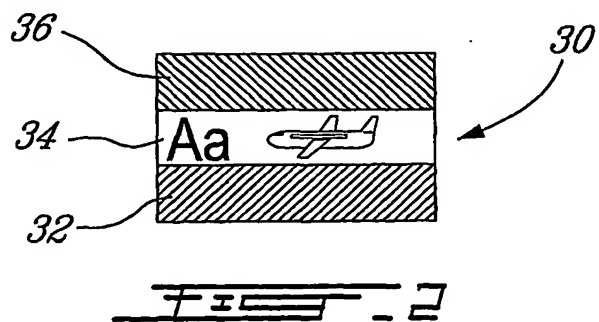
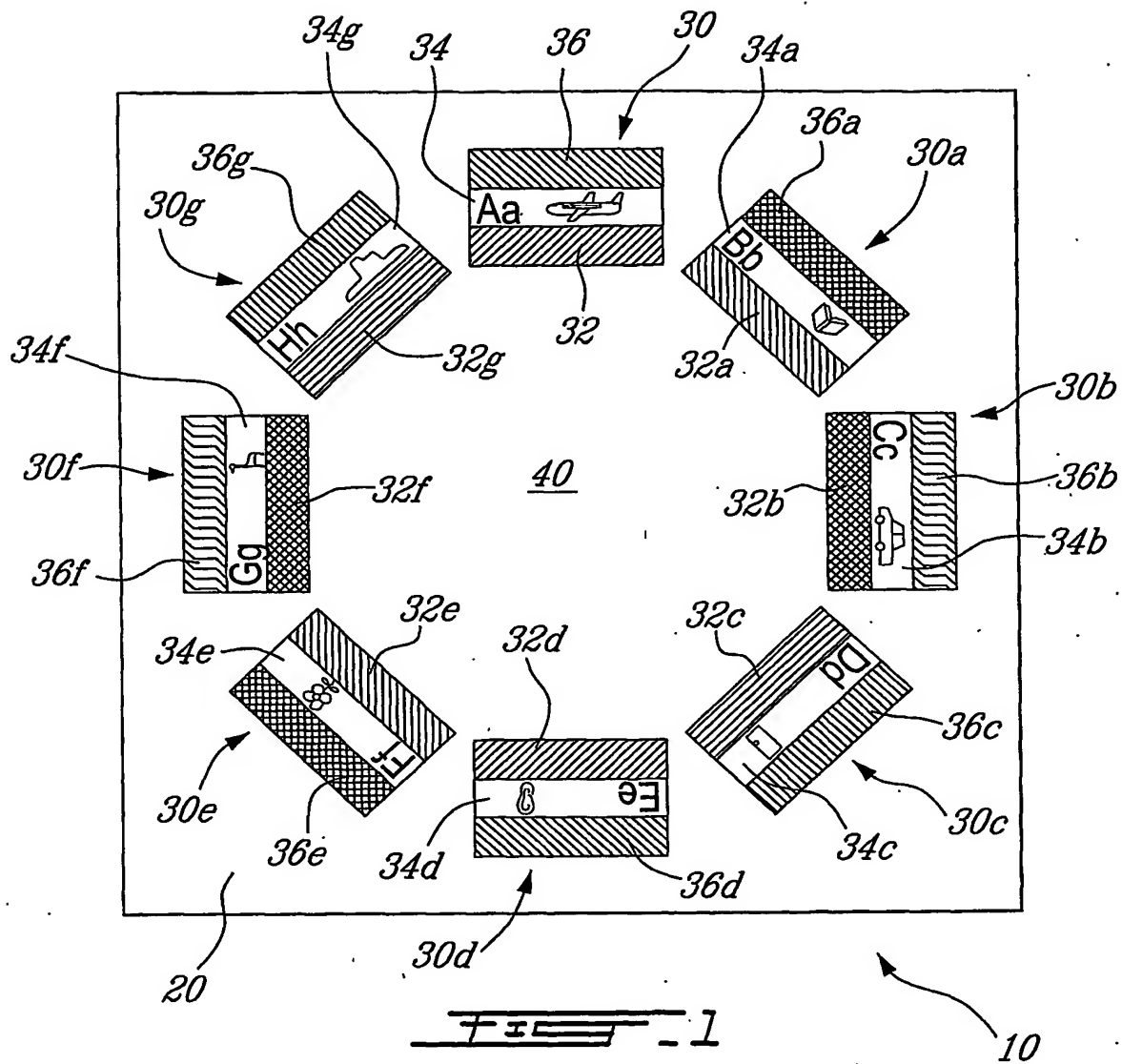


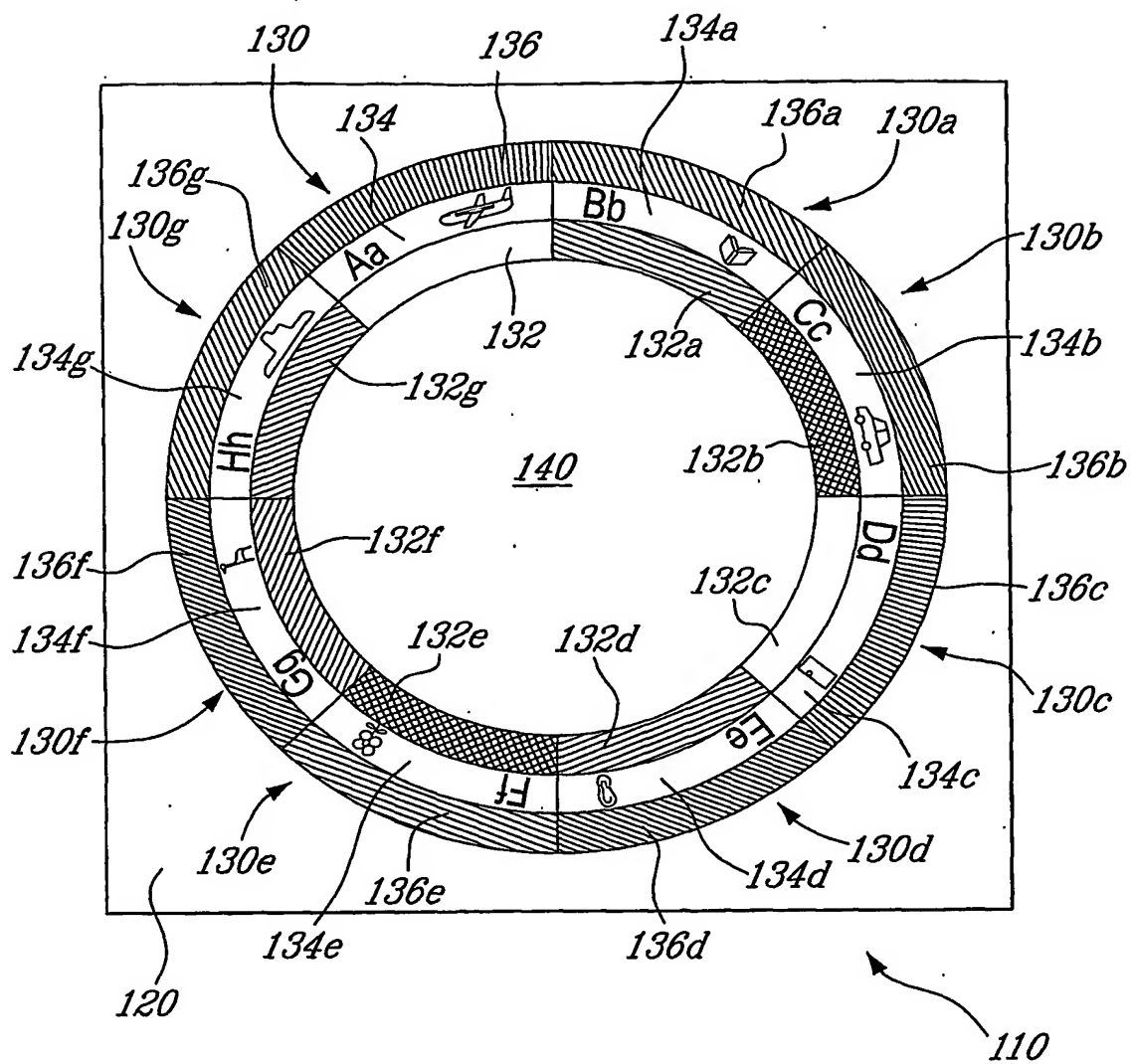
**Published:**

- with international search report
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments

*For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

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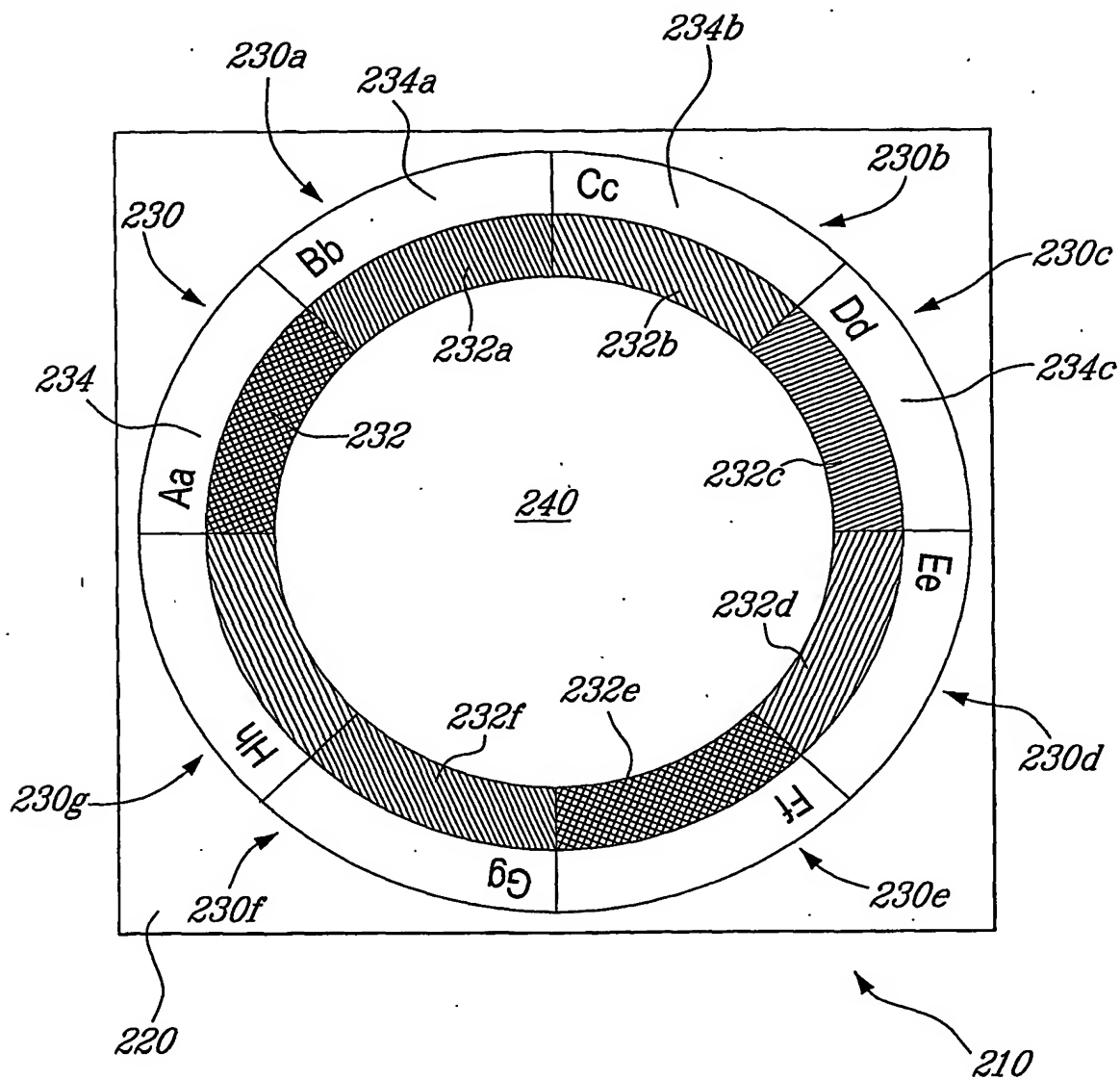


FIG. 4



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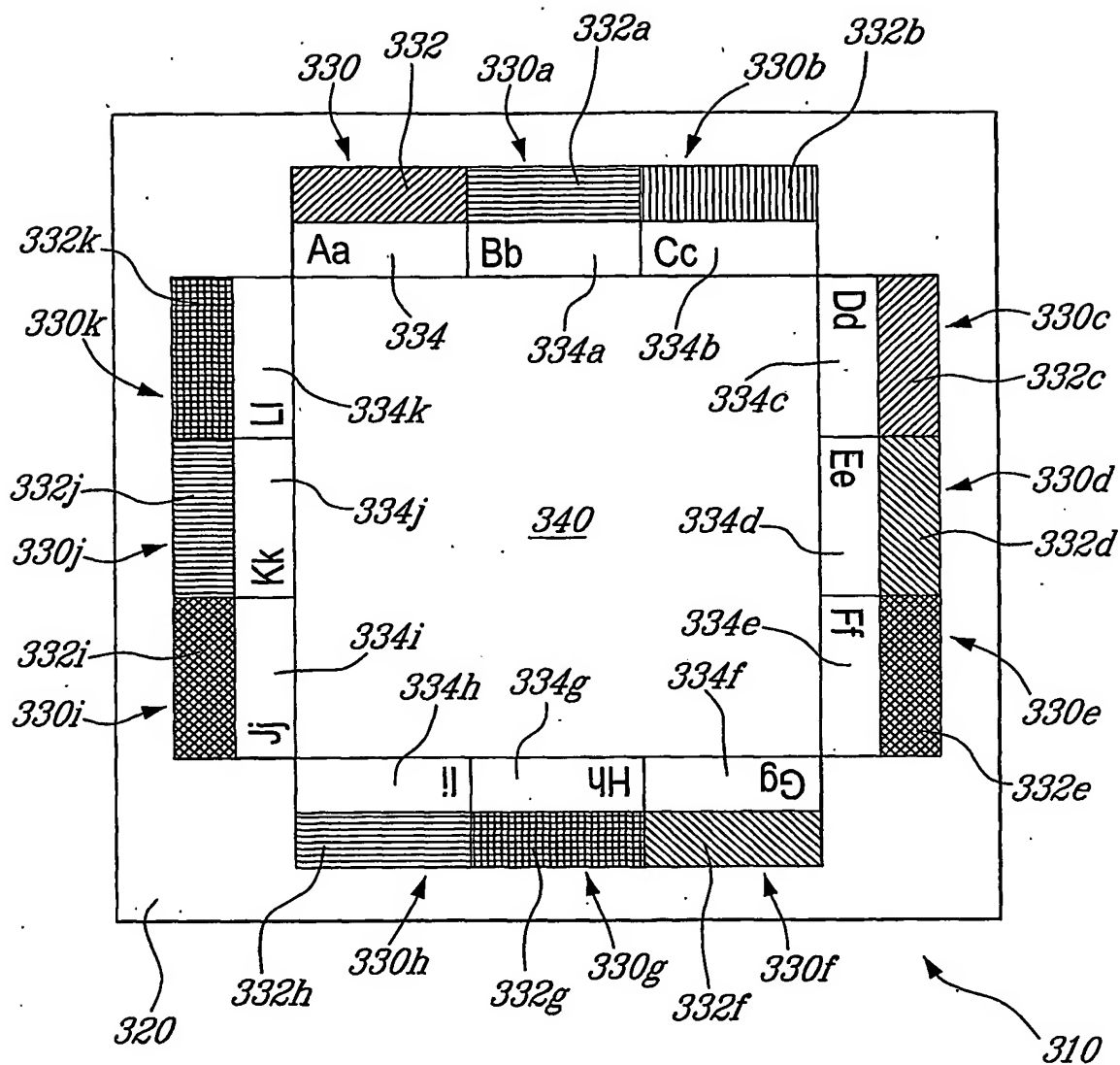
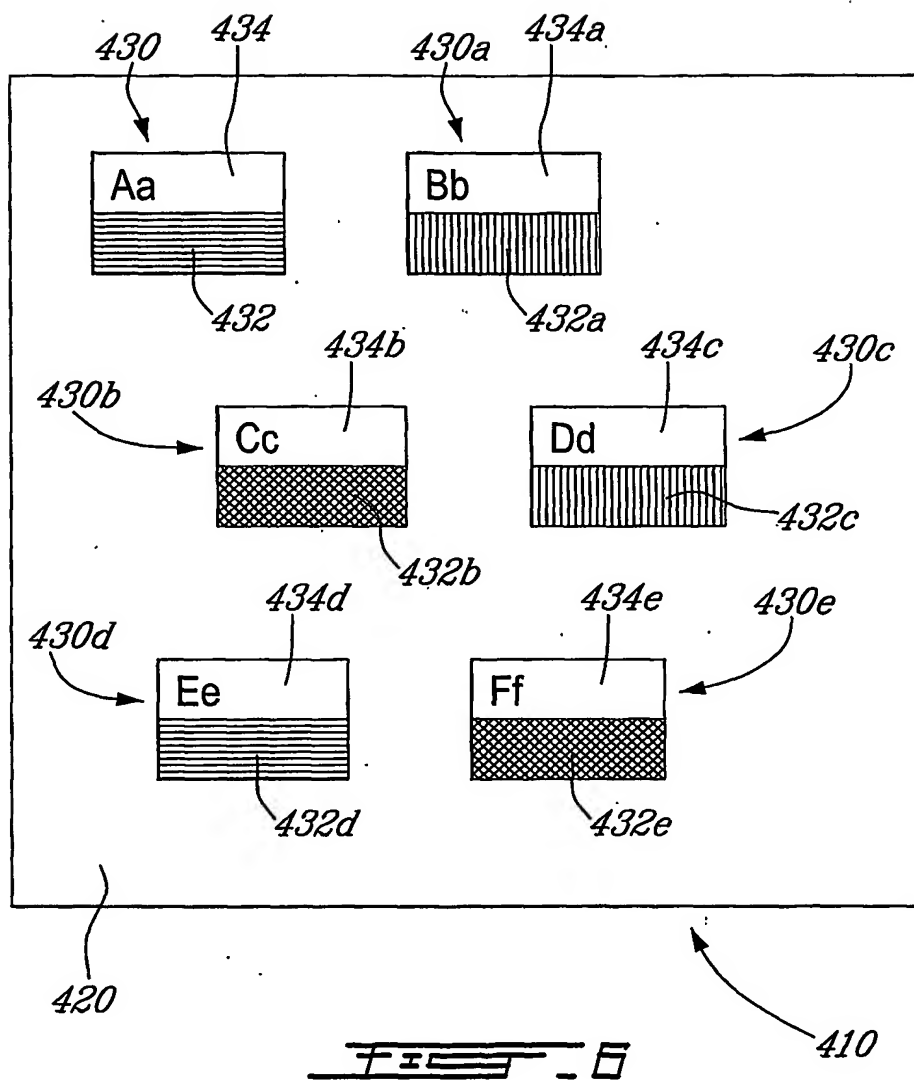


FIG. 5

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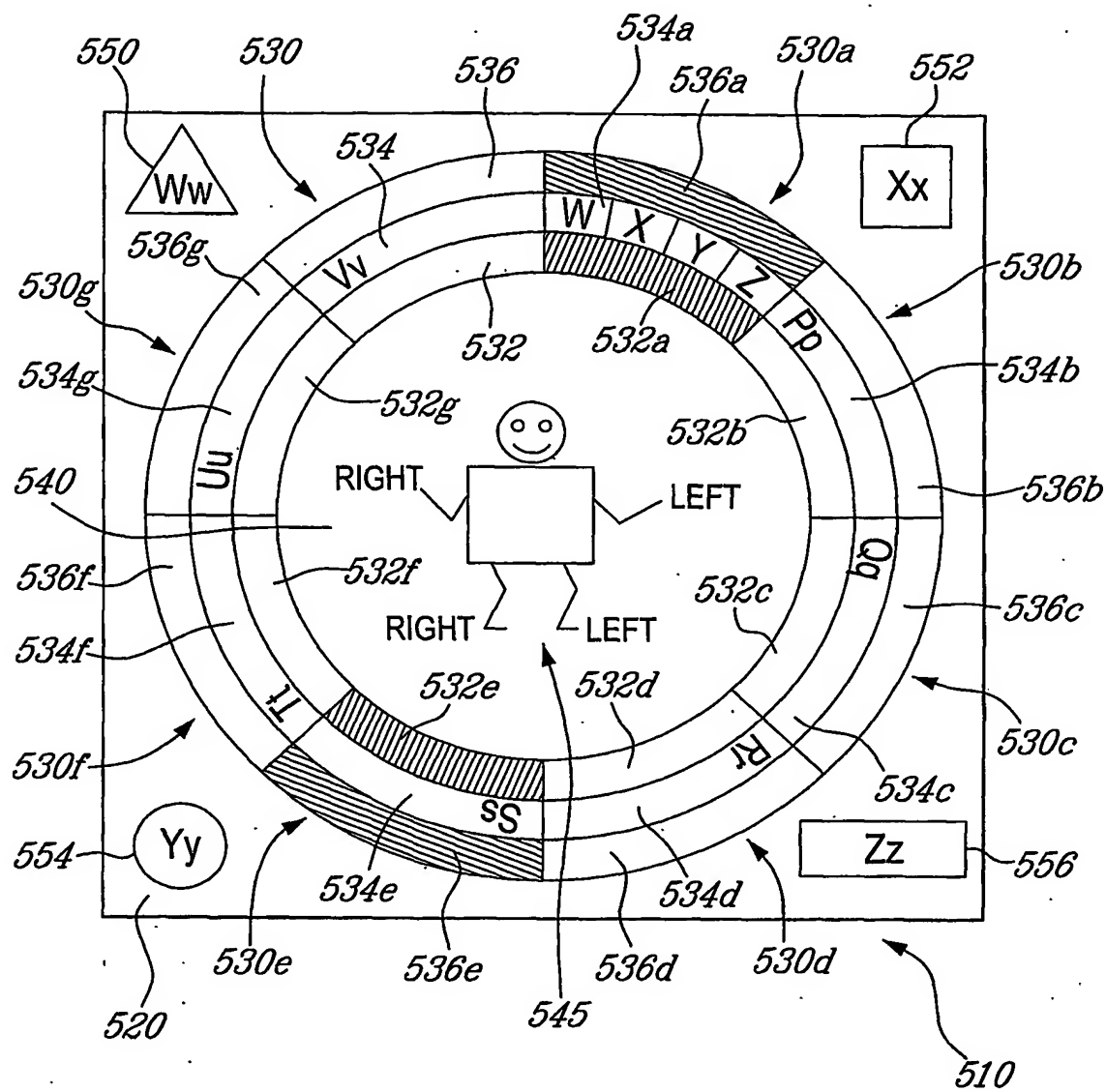
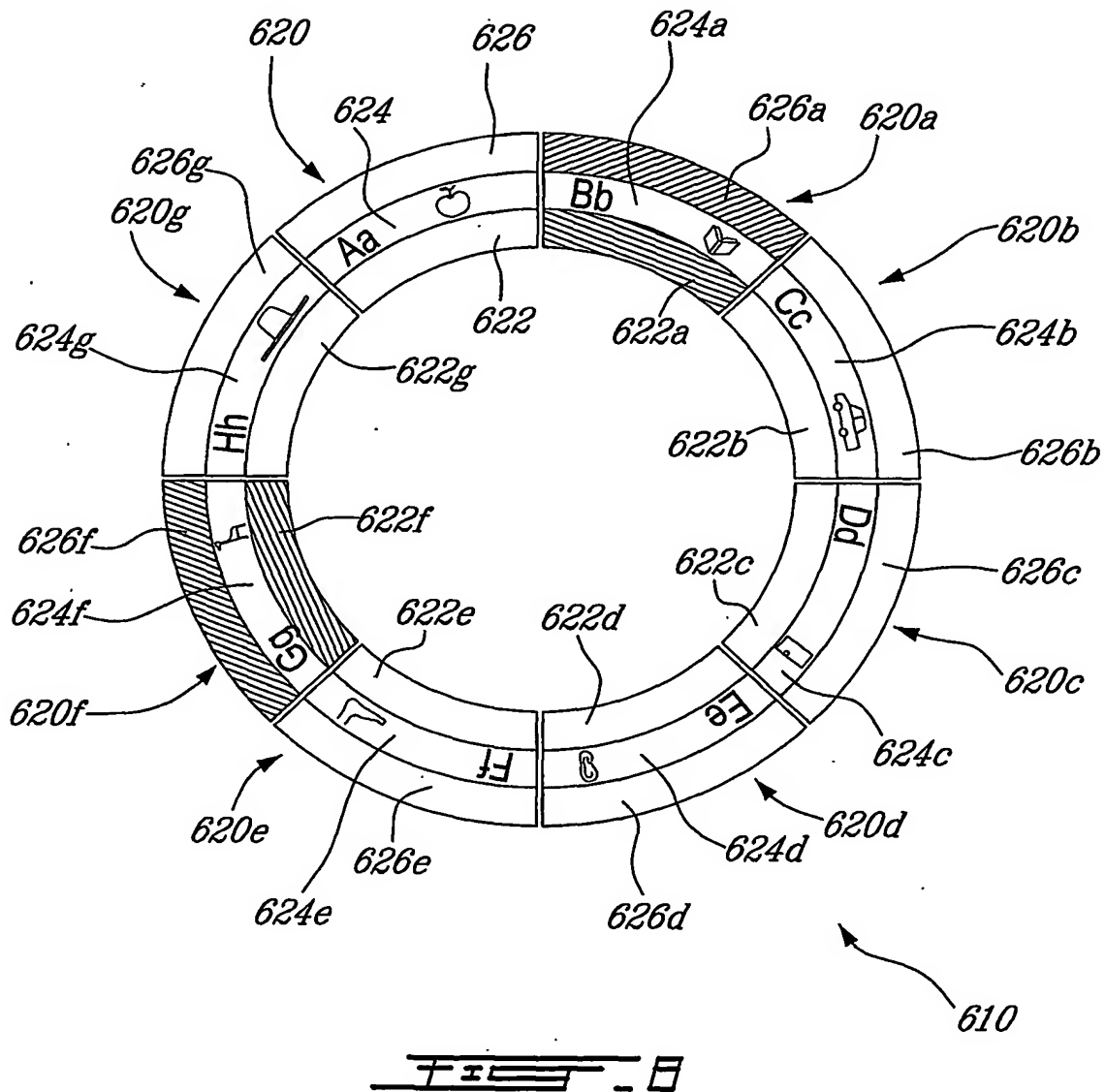


FIG. 7

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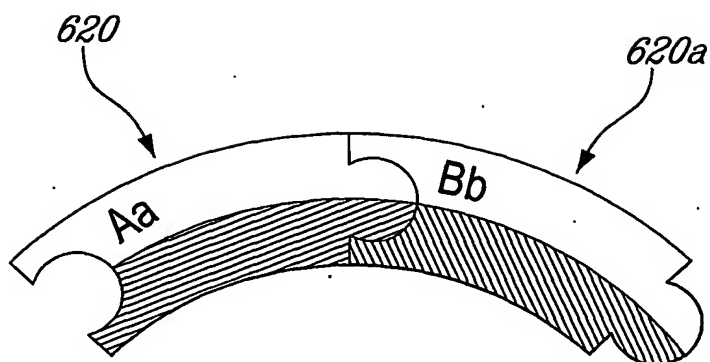


FIG. 9

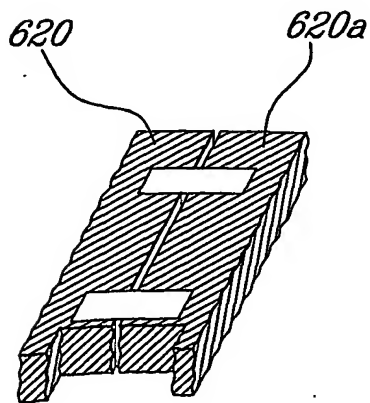


FIG. 10